The **BIG** Idea

- How do I decide where to apply, and how do I begin the process?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes
I.   Warm Up (5 minutes)

II.   Application Review
      (10 minutes)

III. College Research Continues
      (20 minutes)

IV.   Wrap Up: The Finalists Are . . .
      (10 minutes)

MATERIALS

❑ **PORTFOLIO PAGES:**

- Portfolio page 23, College Comparison Chart

- Portfolio pages 13-22, My Top Ten Schools (from Ed After HS 5)

❑ **STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**

- Student Handbook page 147, What I Need to Complete a College Application

- Student Handbook pages 148 - 149, College Application Elements

❑ Overhead projector

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Review what they need to know, and what they need to do, to complete a college application.

- Continue college research.

- Tentatively decide on three or more college choices, including at least one reach, match, and safety.

OVERVIEW

Students begin by briefly reviewing the college application process, and learn what they can do to begin during the summer. The remainder of the lesson is devoted to the completion of research of colleges on their Top Ten list. At the conclusion of the lesson, students discuss how to compare their research findings.

PREPARATION

- ❏ List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- ❏ The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
  - **Student Handbook pages 148 - 149, College Application Elements**
  - **Portfolio page 23, College Comparison Chart**
- ❏ Tell students to bring in the college catalogs, applications, and other materials that they've received in the mail.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Once students choose the colleges they wish to apply to, the next critical step is organizing and compiling information for their college applications. Students need to recognize that college applications are often long and involved, and therefore require time and effort to complete accurately. The summer is a perfect opportunity for college-bound teens to begin working on their applications. For example, asking teachers to write letters of recommendation during the summer, rather than fall when they will be competing with other classmates for the teacher's attention, puts less pressure on the teachers and themselves. Beginning applications over the summer also means students are not rushing, and therefore less likely to make mistakes. The extra time to proof-read (and have others proof-read) all elements of their applications, including essays, puts applicants at an advantage. Students also need time to read each application in its entirety to make sure they understand what each college wants from them. By doing this step in the summer, students have time to call the admissions office to get answers to items they may not understand.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

If students need more than 20 minutes to research their colleges, skip the **Warm Up** activity, and begin with **Activity II, Application Review.**

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up (5 minutes)

1. Direct students, as they enter, to the "Do Now" on **Student Handbook page 147, What I Need to Complete a College Application.** Give them two minutes to complete the activity.

2. Invite volunteers to share what they wrote down.

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE**: As you've probably seen from your research, college applications consist of many parts. Right now, this may seem overwhelming, and something you don't have to think about until sometime in the distant future. But you can start the process this summer and avoid rushing around next fall to meet deadlines. You don't want to have to choose between completing college applications and other senior-year activities: schoolwork, part-time jobs, and more entertaining pursuits.

   Being prepared is key to accurately completing your applications. Today we are going to spend a few minutes reviewing what you need to consider as you begin thinking about the application process.

II. Application Review (10 minutes)

1. Project **Student Handbook pages 148-149, College Application Elements** on the overhead projector.

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Last year, you reviewed a practice application. Next year, you will focus on certain elements of the application, such as the essay, over several lessons.

2. Direct students' attention to the overhead.

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Although applications may vary from college to college, most require some, if not all, of these pieces [point to overhead]. It's important to gather all of the information the applications require well before the submission due date. For example, it's helpful if you allow plenty of time for teachers to write recommendations. Making this request in the spring gives your teachers the time they need to write quality letters, and lets you beat the rush of requests they'll get in the fall. We'll talk more about this next week.

3. Read aloud each of the elements on **Student Handbook pages 148 - 149, College Application Elements.** Emphasize elements students can work on this summer, as noted on the overhead. Remind students that the college application process will be reviewed in more depth next fall.

III. College Research Continues (20 minutes)

1. Have students take out **Portfolio pages 13- 22, My Top Ten Schools.**

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE**: Today you will continue researching colleges on your list. Remember, you will find the information you are looking for on the colleges' websites and in the catalogs you received in the mail. It's quite possible that you won't get to every item for each school today, so don't sweat it. Before class ends, we'll regroup and talk about how to decide which schools to apply to.

   Give students 20 minutes to continue researching their colleges.

IV.   Wrap Up: The Finalists Are . . . (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE**: You've done a great job researching colleges these last few weeks. You are now well on the road to finding schools that will be a good fit for you. Don't stop now! You can continue to research on your own this summer. The time you put in now will save you from rushing around in the fall, and will allow you to really consider your needs and interests.

2. Have students review **Portfolio pages 13- 22, My Top Ten Schools** portfolio pages.

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Look at your research portfolio pages so far. What schools have you ruled out for sure? Why? [Give students a chance to respond]. What schools are definitely in? Why? [Give students a chance to respond.] There may be colleges on your list that you are still not sure about, maybe because you don't have all of the information you need. If this is the case, what do you think are your next steps? [Give students a chance to respond. Be sure students recognize they can continue their research online and/or call the school if they can't find answers to questions on the site or in the catalog.]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE**: As you narrow down the list of colleges this summer, and determine which ones you will apply to, make sure to include at least one safety, one match, and one reach school. If you don't have at least one school in each category, you can return to RUReadyND.com and complete the School Finder tool as often as

you like by adjusting the criteria to fit different needs and interests.

4. Distribute **Portfolio page 23, College Comparison Chart,** to each student, and display a transparency of this page on the overhead projector.

    SAY SOMETHING LIKE: You've collected quite a bit of information over the past few weeks, and will continue to do so in the weeks ahead. To help you compare your findings, use **Portfolio page 23, College Comparison Chart.** This "at-a-glance" chart allows you to put all the pros and cons in one place, so that you can compare your options quickly and easily. For each college you are considering, mark items you rate positively with a "+", items you rate negatively with a "-", and record a "0" for neutral, or no opinion. [Model how to do this.]

    For example, if you're hoping to major in music, a strong music program gets a plus, and an only OK program gets a minus. (If the school has no music program, you can drop it from your list.) For the item marked "Academic Match," write safety, match, or reach in the box provided.

    Please feel free to see me or your school counselor if you encounter any difficult college research questions over the next few weeks. And keep up the good work. Any research you do now will save you time and stress in the fall.

Grade 11, Education After High School 8: Research III
Student Handbook, What I Need to Complete a College Application

147

What I Need to Complete a College Application

Directions: List four items that might be included in a college application.

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

College Application Elements

Most colleges give you a choice of completing an application online and submitting it directly to the school. Or, you can fill out your application offline and send it in the mail, the old-fashioned way.

Application Fee

- Most colleges charge a fee to apply. The fee is usually non-refundable, even if you are not offered admission to the school. Most application fees are about $25. Some colleges charge up to $60. Other colleges have no fee. Many colleges offer fee waivers for applicants from low-income families.

- **WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**: If you need a fee waiver, call the college's admissions office for more information.

High School Transcript

- An official at your high school, such as your school counselor, completes a form that includes your transcript. Remember, a transcript is an official record of your classes and grades. If the school provides a form with your admission materials, you should give it to the guidance office to complete as early as possible. Some colleges send this form directly to your school after receiving your application.

- **WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**: Gather the transcript forms for the schools to which you are applying so you can pass them along to your school counselor in the fall.

Admission Test Scores

- Many colleges require SAT, SAT Subject Test, or ACT test scores. Test scores are a standard way of measuring your ability to do college-level work.

- **WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**: Contact the College Board or the ACT and direct them to send your scores to colleges not included on your list when you took the test. If you've not taken the SAT or ACT, make arrangements to do so.

Letters of Recommendation

- Most colleges request letters of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, or other adult who knows you well.

- **WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**: Make a list of teachers, counselors, and others whom you would like to request letters of recommendation. Make your request to those people. For those who agree, be sure to provide a deadline.

Essay

- Many colleges ask you to write an essay. Essays are a chance for you to show what makes you stand out from everyone else. The essay is your opportunity to be creative and show admissions committees what makes you different.

- **WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**: Review college applications and check out the required essay topics. Start thinking about how you might answer these questions.

Interview

- Although some colleges may not require interviews, you should take advantage of the opportunity. A face-to-face interview lets you connect with a person who will have some say in whether you will be offered admission.

- **WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**: Set up on-campus interviews for local colleges to which you are applying. For colleges that are far away, arrange to meet with an alumnus (somebody who graduated from that college) in your community.

Audition/Portfolio

- Music and art colleges or programs may ask for samples of your work, such as a portfolio, video, CD, etc. to demonstrate your ability.

- **WHAT TO DO THIS SUMMER**: Work on creating your portfolio, video, CD, etc. Your high school teachers may have advice on what to include.

College Comparison Chart

Directions: Write the names of the colleges you are considering across the top row. For each criterion, mark items you rate positively with a "+", items you rate negatively with a "–", and mark items that are neutral with a "0". Next to "Academic Match," rate whether the college is a reach, match, or safety school.

Criteria	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5	College 6	College 7	College 8	College 9	College 10
Academic Match										
Setting										
Tuition										
Academics										
Student Population										
Campus Facilities										
Campus Life										
Off-Campus Community										